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ABSTRACT

This handbook describes a workshop designed to help administrative personnel improve school system writing programs. The handbook contains agendas for one-day and two-day workshops, and modules that provide (1) a case study of a writing program coordinator; (2) a discussion of the basic elements of a writing program, including program philosophy, skills to be taught, teaching methods and materials, evaluation methods, and teacher training methods; (3) a rating scale to elicit opinions on a number of writing related issues; (4) a selected bibliography of readings for administrators; (5) a list of functions and activities for the program administrator; (6) explanations of analytic and holistic scoring, and writing samples to be scored by workshop participants; and (7) guidelines for assessing and restructuring writing programs. Additional resources contained in the handbook include suggestions for using the writing folder in the classroom, a writing program assessment instrument, a discussion of competency programs for basic skills improvement, and descriptions of the New Jersey Writing Project and an individualized language arts program. (FL)

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ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS

A Workshop Leader's Handbook

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ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS

A WORKSHOP LEADER'S HANDBOOK

John Collins, Ed.D.
Principal Author and Project Director

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Revision of the NREPP document with support from the Northeast Regional Exchange (NEREX) began in September, 1981. The NEREX established the Basic Skills Writing Task Force whose careful analysis of the original guide and recommendations have improved the revision efforts. Members of this task force include Douglas Fleming, Karen Jambeck, Brud Maxcy, Stacey Bressler, Joanne Baker, Charles Chew, Henry D'Aloisio, Pat Austin, Nancy Atwell, Tom Newkirk, A.D. Van Nostrand and Nancy Taylor.

Others who have contributed their time, talents, and energy to this project include Jeff Lucove, author of two articles in the manual; Norm Colb and Kalle Gerritz, who authored the writing folder article; and Mary Poulin, the project's administrative assistant, whose conscientiousness made it possible to meet our project deadlines.

John Collins
Project Director

Denise Blumenthal
Project Associate

- Limit the workshop enrollment to a minimum of nine and a maximum of twenty-five participants.
- Review the resources in the manual thoroughly before the workshop begins.
- Have extra copies of workshop handouts available for the participants. Introduce the participants and make them feel welcome.
- Start the workshop on time and keep it moving.
- Don't stifle discussion that is germane to the issue at hand; however, when the discussion becomes redundant, tactfully cut if off. Don't deny people their feelings -- allow them to express their views.
- Encourage participation by drawing all participants into the discussion. Try to keep any one person from dominating the workshop.
- Begin planning for the next workshop as soon as this one is concluded. Try tape recording the workshop and listening to it for evaluation purposes.
- Don't wait to the end of the workshop to conduct an evaluation. Stop at least once during the day and request feedback. At the end of the day, hand out the workshop evaluation form.
- Consider having lunch catered to avoid long lunch breaks.
- Review the Additional Resources section. If there are resources that are especially relevant to the workshop group, include them in the packet and plan time to highlight them.

One Day Workshop Agenda

9:00 - 9:15	Introduction to the Workshop
9:15 - 10:00	Lee Quill Case Study
10:00 - 10:30	What Is A Writing Program?
10:30 - 10:45	BREAK
10:45 - 11:15	Coordination Functions and Activities
11:15 - 12:00	Planning for a Writing Program: Creating a Management Plan
12:00 - 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 - 1:45	Issues That Everyone is Talking About
1:45 - 2:30	Evaluating Student Writing: Holistic and Analytic Scoring
2:30 - 3:00	Examining the Resource Packet
3:00 - 3:15	Continued Planning
3:15 - 3:30	End of Workshop Summary and Evaluation

9:00 - 9:15 Module I - Workshop Introduction

Objective:

- To introduce the trainer to the participants and vice versa.

Materials:

- Name tags, felt tip markers
- Sign-in sheets
- Coffee, tea
- Resource book for each participant
- Agenda for the day

Tips:

- Begin no more than 10 minutes late.
- Make certain the registration area is not near the entry way.
- Review the entire training manual and resource book prior to the workshop.

9:15 - 10:00 Module II - Case Study of a Writing Coordinator

Objectives:

- To give participants an opportunity to think about program management, and to share ideas and approaches.

Materials:

- "Lee Quill Case Study"- Handout #1

Tips:

- Encourage the group to list random ideas and suggestions rather than to develop a sequential plan.

ACTIVITIES

1. Introduce self to the group (e.g., current position, past experience in schools, experience in basic skill areas, etc.).
2. Ask participants, by show of hands, who is a superintendent, assistant superintendent, curriculum coordinator, building principal, competency coordinator, classroom teacher, etc.
3. Review the agenda with the participants.

1. Ask participants to read the "Lee Quill Case Study" individually and to jot down individual reactions.
2. Ask participants to divide into groups of no more than four and discuss and define Lee's problems.
3. Have the total group discuss and, if possible, reach consensus about Lee's problem(s).
4. Draw generalizations from the group's discussions about the problems of managing a writing project.
5. Have the total group suggest some next steps for Lee.

10:00 - 10:30 Module III - What Is A Writing Program?

Objectives:

- To determine the components of a writing program.
- To begin an action plan for Lee Quill.

Materials:

- "One Person's Definition of a Writing Program" - Handout #2
- Chalkboard, chalk

Tips:

- Stress the fact that the article is not the definitive answer.

10:30 - 10:45 Break

- Identify the location of restrooms, telephones, smoking areas.
- Set 10:45 sharp as the start-up time.

10:45 - 11:15 Module V - Coordination Functions and Activities

Objectives:

- To familiarize the participants with the elements of program management: planning, organizing and controlling, and evaluating.
- To help the participants to develop a set of action plans for managing their own writing programs.

Materials:

- "Coordinating A Writing Program: Critical Functions" - Handout #6
- "Lee Quill Planning Sheet" - Handout #3

Tips:

- Stress that the listing is just a starting point that can be added to or changed.

ACTIVITIES

1. Ask, "What is a writing program?" Write participants' answers on board.
2. Pass out "One Person's View of a Writing Program." Have participants read article.
3. Note the components of a writing program mentioned in the article that are already on the chalkboard, and record the components that are missing. Try to develop a complete list with which the group is comfortable.
4. Based on the list on the chalkboard, ask, "What activities should Lee do to find out if she has a writing program?"

1. Break

1. Discuss handout.
2. Ask participants to eliminate or modify those activities that do not seem appropriate for Lee.

11:15 - 12:00 Planning For A Writing Program

Objectives:

- To help the participants to develop a set of action plans for managing their own writing programs.

Materials:

- "Program Planning Worksheets" - Handout #7

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

Tips:

- Distribute a sheet of nearby restaurants -- locations, costs.
- If you cannot arrange lunch for entire group at meeting site, stress that the afternoon session will begin promptly at 1:00.

1:00 - 1:45 Module IV: Issues in Writing

Objectives:

- To develop an awareness of the controversial issues about writing.

Materials:

- "Issues That Everyone is Talking About"-Handout #4
- "Annotated Bibliography on Writing for School Administrators" - Handout #5
- Newsprint and markers or chalkboard and chalk

Tips:

- This activity may be used by participants in their own school systems as part of a staff development workshop in writing skills.
- Issues...can be given twice, as a pre- and post-test, to determine if participants' attitudes have changed.
- This activity may take less than the prescribed time allotment.
- Avoid pushing your version of the "right" answer on participants.

ACTIVITIES

1. Ask participants to develop their own action plans on the program planning worksheet.

LUNCH

1. Instruct participants to fill out the "Issues That Everyone is Talking About" questionnaire individually.
2. Have participants share their responses in groups of 2-3.
3. Instruct the groups to reach consensus.
4. Ask a spokesperson for each group to present the group's responses.
5. Keep track of responses on newsprint or chalkboard and summarize each group's responses.
6. Have participants skim Annotated Bibliography and, if time allows, discuss the references.

1:45 - 2:30 Module VII - Evaluation Writing

Objectives:

- To familiarize the participants with holistic analytic, primary trait, writing mechanics and T-unit scoring.
- To define the purposes of evaluation.

Materials:

- Blackboard, chalk and the following handouts:
  1. "Analytic Scoring: An Overview" - #9
  2. "My Favorite Place" (uncorrected) - #10
  3. "My Favorite Place" (corrected) - #11
  4. "Holistic Scoring: An Overview" - #12
  5. "Analytic and Holistic Scoring of Writing: Advantages, Disadvantages of Each" - #13

Tips:

- For the analytic scoring, allow as much time as is needed.
- For holistic scoring, allow 3-5 minutes. Keep in mind that evaluation has two purposes: 1) to give a system a picture of its student writing and 2) to improve student writing.

2:30 - 3:00 Examining the Resource Packet

Objectives:

- To familiarize the participants with the resources for improving writing which are listed in the resource packet.

Materials:

- Additional Resources section

Tips:

- For each resource, suggest that participants add their own suggestions.
- Identify specific resources.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have each participant correct the student writing sample "Flying." (Handout #8)
2. List what the participants did to correct papers; e.g., "I circled all the misspelled words", "I corrected the capital letters", "I gave it a grade."
3. Discuss "Analytic Scoring: An Overview."
4. Instruct the group to correct analytically "My Favorite Place" (5-10 minutes). Then, show the overhead of "My Favorite Place" with corrections. Discuss the pros and cons of the way the paper is corrected vs. the way the participants have corrected the paper.

Holistic Scoring

5. Discuss each aspect of "Holistic Scoring: An Overview."
6. Instruct the group to score holistically the sample compositions. (10 minutes, or until the group has finished.) Discuss the scores of each paper and the scoring process.
7. Discuss "Analytic and Holistic Scoring of Writing: Advantages, Disadvantages of Each."
8. Review "A Comparison of Scoring Methods for Direct Writing Assessment."

1. Review the "Additional Resources" with the participants.

3:00 - 3:15 Continued Planning

Objectives:

- To share the next steps and create a management plan.

3:15 - 3:30 End of Workshop Summary and Evaluation

Objectives:

- To summarize the day's learnings, and provide feedback to trainer.

Materials:

- "Workshop Evaluation Sheet" - (In Trainer's Materials)

ACTIVITIES

1. Make the final revisions on the planning sheets.
2. Use "Assessing and Restructuring Writing Programs" (Handout #14) and "Suggestions for Using the Writing Folder" (Additional Resources) to make final revisions.
3. Share the completed plans.

1. Summarize the learnings from the day.
2. Distribute the end of workshop summary sheet.
3. Bring closure to the meeting.

Two Day Workshop Agenda

Day One

9:00 - 9:15	Introduction to the Workshop
9:15 - 9:45	Three Questions That I'd Like Answered by The End of The Workshop Are ...
9:45 - 10:45	Lee Quill Case Study
10:45 - 11:00	BREAK
11:00 - 11:45	What Is a Writing Program?
11:45 - 12:00	Planning for a Writing Program
12:00 - 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 - 2:00	"Issues Everyone Is Talking About"
2:00 - 2:30	Coordination Functions and Activities
2:30 - 3:00	End of Day Summary and Mid-Point Evaluation (suggestions to make tomorrow better)

9:00 - 9:15 Module I - Workshop Introduction

Objective:

- To introduce the trainer to the participants and vice versa.

Materials:

- Name tags, felt tip markers
- Sign-in sheets
- Coffee, tea
- Resource book for each participant
- Agenda for the day

Tips:

- Begin no more than 10 minutes late.
- Make certain the registration area is not near the entry way.
- Review the entire training manual and resource book prior to the workshop.

9:15 - 9:45

Objectives:

- To initiate discussion about basic skills and create a relaxed atmosphere among the participants.
- To have participants list own goals.

Materials:

- Easel, newsprint, felt tip markers or
- Chalkboard, chalk, eraser

Trainer Tips:

- Allow enough time for discussion.
- Try not to leave questions unanswered.

ACTIVITIES

1. Introduce self to the group (e.g., current position, past experience in schools, experience in basic skill areas, etc.).
2. Ask participants, by show of hands, who is a superintendent, assistant superintendent, curriculum coordinator, building principal, competency coordinator, classroom teacher, etc.
3. Review the agenda with the participants.

1. Ask participants to list three questions they would like answered by the end of this workshop.
2. Have the participants write the questions individually.
3. Divide the participants into groups of 2-3 and ask each group to share and discuss their questions.
4. Select spokesperson for each group and ask each spokesperson for summary of the questions.
5. Keep track of the questions on newsprint or a chalkboard.
6. Comment on what will and won't be covered in the workshop. For those areas that will not be covered, direct the participants to the appropriate resources, if possible.

9:45 - 10:45 Module II - Case Study of A Writing Coordinator

Objectives:

- To give participants an opportunity to think about program management, and to share ideas and approaches.

Materials:

- "Lee Quill Case Study"- Handout #1

Tips:

- Encourage the group to list random ideas and suggestions rather than to develop a sequential plan.
- Identify the location of restrooms, telephones, smoking areas.
- Set 11:00 sharp as the start-up time.

10:45 - 11:00 Break

11:00 - 11:45 Module III - What Is A Writing Program?

Objectives:

- To determine the components of a writing program.
- To begin an action plan for Lee Quill.

Materials:

- "One Person's Definition of a Writing Program"- Handout #2
- Chalkboard, chalk

Tips:

- Stress the fact that the article is not the definitive answer.

ACTIVITIES

1. Ask participants to read the Lee Quill Case Study individually and to jot down individual reactions.
2. Ask participants to divide into groups of no more than four and discuss and define Lee's problems.
3. Have the total group discuss and, if possible, reach consensus about Lee's problem(s).
4. Draw generalizations from the group's discussions about the problems of managing a writing project.
5. Have the total group suggest some next steps for Lee.

1. Break

1. Ask, "What is a writing program?" Write participants' answers on board.
2. Pass out "One Person's View of a Writing Program." Have participants read the article.
3. Note the components of a writing program mentioned in the article that are already on the chalkboard, and record the components that are missing. Try to develop a complete list with which the group is comfortable.
4. Based on the list on the chalkboard, ask, "What activities should Lee do to find out if she has a writing program?"

11:45 - 12:00 "Lee Quill Planning Sheet"

Objective:

- To turn the morning discussions and learnings into action plans for Lee.

Materials:

- Lee Quill Planning Sheet" - Handout #3

Tips:

- The group should use this sheet throughout the workshop, adding to it as new information is presented.

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

Tips:

- If you cannot arrange lunch for entire group at meeting site, distribute a sheet of nearby restaurants -- locations, costs.
- Stress that the afternoon session will begin promptly at 1:00.

1:00 - 2:00 Module IV - Issues in Writing (Optional activity if doing one-day workshop)

Objectives:

- To develop an awareness of the controversial issues about writing.

Materials:

- Issues Everyone is Talking About - Handout #4
- Annotated Bibliography on Writing for School Administrators
- Newsprint and markers or chalkboard and chalk

Tips:

- This activity may be used by participants in their own school systems as a part of a staff development workshop in writing skills.
- This inventory can be given twice, as a pre- and post-test, to determine if participants' attitudes have changed by the end of the workshop.
- This activity may take less than the prescribed time allotment.
- Avoid pushing your version of the "right" answer on participants.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have participants list any activities on the Lee Quill Planning Sheet that they feel Lee should consider as she develops her writing action plan.
2. Instruct group to not worry about time or resource limitations, as they will be revising the worksheet throughout the workshop.

LUNCH

1. Instruct participants to fill out the "Issues Everyone Is Talking About" questionnaire individually.
2. Have participants share their responses in groups of 2-3.
3. Instruct the groups to reach consensus.
4. Ask a spokesperson for each group to present the group's responses.
5. Keep track of responses on newsprint or chalkboard and summarize each group's responses.
6. Have participants skim Annotated Bibliography, and if time allows, discuss the references.

2:00 - 2:45 Module V - Coordination Functions and Activities

Objectives:

- To familiarize the participants with the elements of program management: planning, organizing and controlling, and evaluating.
- To help the participants to develop a set of action plans for managing their own writing programs.

Materials:

- "Coordinating A Writing Program: Critical Functions"- Handout #6
- "Lee Quill Planning Sheet"- Handout #3
- "Program Planning Worksheets"- Handout #7a (Continue to add to the Lee Quill Planning Sheet")

Tips:

- Stress that the listing is just a starting point that can be added to or changed.

2:45 - 3:00

Objective:

- To summarize the day's learnings and provide feedback to the trainer.

Material:

- "Workshop Evaluation Sheet"- Handout #8

Tips:

- At the end of DAY I of a two-day workshop, encourage the participants to make suggestions that can be incorporated into the DAY II agenda.

ACTIVITIES

1. Discuss handout.
2. Ask participants to eliminate or modify those activities that do not seem appropriate for Lee.
3. Have participants add to the list of activities on the "Lee Quill Planning Sheet".

1. Summarize the learnings from the day.
2. Distribute the end of workshop summary sheet.
3. Bring closure to the meeting and remind participants of the starting time for DAY II.

Day Two

9:00 - 9:30	Reviewing Day I: Sharing Planning Sheets
9:30 - 10:30	Creating Awareness About Your Writing Program
10:30 - 10:45	BREAK
10:45 - 11:45	Evaluating Writing: Holistic and Analytic Scoring
11:45 - 12:00	Revising Planning Sheets
12:00 - 1:00	LUNCH
1:00 - 2:00	Examining the Resource Packet
2:00 - 2:30	Sharing Next Steps Creating a Management Plan
2:30 - 3:00	Reviewing Day I and II Evaluation of Workshop

9:00 - 9:30 Reviewing Day I: Sharing Planning Sheets

Objectives:

- To review the DAY I activities.
- To review the results of the DAY I evaluation forms.
- To share the DAY I planning sheets.

Materials:

- "Lee Quill Planning Sheet", individual planning sheet
- Blackboard, chalk
- Coffee, tea
- Overhead, screen

Tips:

- The activity can take less than 1/2 hour.
- Begin no more than 10 minutes late.

9:30 - 10:30 Module VI: Writing About Writing

Objectives:

- To develop a method for creating community awareness of the basic skill program.
- To enable the participants to have brief writing experiences.

Materials:

- Paper, pen, blackboard, chalk

Tips:

- Do not force the participants to read their press releases aloud.
- Suggest that the group jot down ideas as releases are read aloud.

ACTIVITIES

1. Review the DAY I activities and learnings: comment on the "Lee Quill Case Study," "Components of A Writing Program," and the "Issues Everybody is Talking About" modules.
2. Ask the group to share "Lee Quill Planning Sheet" activities.

1. Ask participants to choose one topic and write:
   - a press release describing their system's plan for improving writing skills, or
   - an outline for a PTA presentation on their system's basic writing skills program, or
   - a memo to the school committee and/or superintendent about the basic writing skills program.
2. Solicit ideas from the group about the assignment and write these ideas on the board.
3. Generate ideas about ways of developing community involvement in basic skill programs.

10:30 - 10:45 Break

Tips:

- Provide directions to the coffee.
- Give directions to the men's room, the women's room, the telephone and the smoking area.
- Remind participants to return at 10:45 sharp.

10:45 - 11:45 Module VII - Evaluating Writing

Objectives:

- To familiarize the participants with holistic analytic, primary trait, writin, mechanics and T-unit scoring.
- To define the purposes of evaluation.

Materials:

- Blackboard, chalk and the following handouts:
  1. "Analytic Scoring: An Overview"- #9
  2. "My Favorite Place" (uncorrected) - #10
  3. "My Favorite Place" (corrected) - #11
  4. "Holistic Scoring: An Overview"- #12
  5. "Analytic and Holistic Scoring of Writing Advantages, Disadvantages of Each"- #13

Tips:

- For the analytic scoring, allow as much time as is needed.

ACTIVITIES

3. Ask the group to write for 10-15 minutes.
4. Ask volunteers to read their papers aloud.
5. Summarize the components of an effective communication about a writing program.

1. Break

1. Present and discuss "Analytic Scoring: An Overview."
2. Instruct the group to correct analytically "My Favorite Place" (5-10 minutes). Then, show the overhead or use handout #10 of "My Favorite Place" with the corrections. Discuss the pros and cons of the way the paper is corrected vs. the way the participants have corrected the paper.

Holistic Scoring

3. Discuss each aspect of "Holistic Scoring: An Overview" (Handout #12).
4. Instruct the group to holistically score "My Favorite Place."
5. Discuss the group's holistic scoring of "My Favorite Place." Ask how many gave the composition x 1, x 2, x 3 or 4. Then ask for individual reasons.
6. Discuss "Analytic and Holistic Scoring of Writing: Advantages, Disadvantages of Each."
7. Review "A Comparison of Scoring Methods for Direct Writing Assessment."

Tips: (cont'd)

- For holistic scoring, allow 3-5 minutes.
- Keep in mind that evaluation has two purposes: 1) to improve student writing; and, 2) to give a district a picture of its student writing.

11:45 - 12:00

Objective:

- To revise the planning sheets based on the DAY II activities.

Tips:

- Each activity should suggest new planning sheet activities. Encourage the participants to review the previous handouts.

12:00 - 1:00 LUNCH

1:00 - 2:00

Objective:

- To familiarize the participants with the resources for improving writing which are listed in the resource packet.

Materials:

- Additional resources packet

Tips:

- For each resource, suggest that participants add their own suggestions.
- Identify the state/specific resources.

ACTIVITIES

1. Have the participants add new activities to their planning sheets.
2. If time allows, have the participants share their new activities.
3. Refer the participants to handouts 20 and 21 for some specific recommendations to improve their current writing programs.

1. LUNCH

1. Review the additional resources with the participants.

2:00 - 2:30

Objectives:

- To share the next steps and create a management plan.

Materials:

- New and old planning sheets.
- "Assessing and Restructuring Writing Programs" and "Suggestions for Using the Writing Folder."

Tips:

- Give the participants new planning sheets for revisions.

ACTIVITIES

1. Make the final revisions on the planning sheets.
2. Use "Assessing and Restructuring Writing Programs" (Handout #14) and "Suggestions for Using the Writing Folder" (Additional Resources) to make final revisions.
3. Share the completed plans.

2:30 - 3:00

Objective:

- To bring closure to the workshop.

Materials:

- "Workshop Evaluation" (In Trainer's Materials) - Handout #3

1. Summarize the DAY I and DAY II activities and learnings.
2. Complete the end of workshop evaluation form.

Workshop Evaluation Form

(Please read over all questions first)

		Disagree				Agree
1.	The administrative arrangements were very good	1	2	3	4	5
2.	The presentation was well organized	1	2	3	4	5
3.	The workshop objectives were completely achieved	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The workshop was appropriate for my needs now	1	2	3	4	5
5.	The workshop needs, at most, only minor changes	1	2	3	4	5

6. What important parts of this workshop would you suggest be retained?

7. What changes would you like to see made in the workshop design, administration, or instruction?

8. Would you recommend this workshop to your colleagues?

PARTICIPANT MATERIALS

Lee Quill Case Study

Lee Quill is the Writing Program Coordinator in Freetown, a K-12 suburban school district with a total population of 6500 students. During the past decade Lee has developed a reading program that is viewed as quite successful: students are outperforming those in surrounding towns on standardized tests, and teachers seem to feel that the program is challenging but not overwhelming.

In a school committee budget session two weeks ago, there were questions about the amount of consumable materials required by the reading program, but the committee tabled discussion until they had more information. In the same meeting the school newspaper budget was cut. This cut was accompanied by a heated discussion about the poor quality of student written articles. One board member also cited reports from local businesses that students graduating from Freetown's schools could not read or write well.

Lee, realizing there was little to offer other than an opinion, kept out of the discussion but felt that the newspaper was interesting and reasonably well written. Last week, in a discussion with the Freetown superintendent, the conversation turned to the state's new basic skills law, which will go into effect next year. The superintendent suggested that Lee prepare a memo on the district's writing program and commented, "I'm not too sure these kids can write. And, you know, we haven't had an inservice training program in writing in years."

The school committee's discussion and the superintendent's comments have begun to make Lee more than a little concerned. She is actually not at all sure how well Freetown students write, and the thoughts of a new program emphasis are causing her to flash back to the days when she had all she could do to get teachers to attend meetings about reading. And, with rumored school closings, Lee is convinced that other program changes will be more difficult to implement in the future. Lee is also worried about time. Along with her other duties, she's under a lot of pressure to help principals evaluate teachers.

It's early December in Freetown. What actions would you recommend to Lee?

One Person's Definition of a Writing Program

Developed by

Jeffrey S. Lucove

Basic Elements of a Writing Program

The recent emphasis on minimum competency testing and basic skills improvement has caused those of us responsible for curriculum management (design, supervision, evaluation) to review our school and district writing programs. We do this with an eye toward restructuring what is to what should be. But on what basis, using what criteria, should we make changes? A reasonable starting point is to answer the question: What are the basic elements of a well-managed writing program? The answer to this question provides us with a common framework from which intelligent management decisions emanate. With this focus in mind, I recommend that writing programs consist of six basic elements:

- A PHILOSOPHY;
- A SET OF SKILLS;
- A PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS:
- SUPPORTING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES;
- AN EVALUATION SYSTEM; AND
- ON-GOING TEACHER TRAINING.

Element #1 - A PHILOSOPHY

A program philosophy is the first essential ingredient in its success. The philosophy of a writing program should be established by those who instruct and supervise within the program. It should reflect the beliefs that teachers subscribe to concerning how students acquire writing skills and how these skills should be taught. It should include statements about why the teaching of writing is important, who has the primary responsibility for its instruction, and the relative position that such instruction should hold within the overall curriculum. A writing program philosophy should be informed by teacher experience coupled with what is known from the literature of composition. It should be the basis for decision making about the other elements of the writing program; and it should, of course, be written for all to see.

Element #2 - A SET OF SKILLS

Educational programs are designed and managed based on the belief that students need to learn certain skills. Though the precise skills repertoire is moot, we can all generally agree that

students should be able to exhibit facility with a number of skills to be considered good writers. Traditionally, the skills identified as necessary have included simple transcription, proper grammatical usage, spelling, syntactic variety and fluency, organization, and sense of audience. As managers of writing programs, we can deal with this set of skills in one of three ways. We can put the skills into a definitively articulated scope and sequence, we can state the skills in the form of behavioral objectives, or we can describe the skills within the context of desired types of writing products.

Whichever way(s) we choose to identify or specify the set of skills, all writing program managers need to be aware of three important caveats. First, writing skills should not be taught in isolation but rather as part of the total writing process. A fragmented approach produces students who are capable of passing quizzes and tests on particular skills, but are often incapable of using those same skills in their writing. Second, we need to remember that children display considerable variation in language acquisition. An efficient skills element must include flexibility of instruction. Finally, managers need to be careful that student skills are not identified without subsequently identifying teacher skills necessary for their instruction.

Element #3 - A PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

Most (so-called) writing programs offer an easily identifiable constant inconsistency of pedagogical approach. In fact, within the span of his or her years in public schools, the classroom student is often exposed to as many as, and sometimes more than, twelve or thirteen different approaches to writing instruction! It is not altogether surprising that most public schools end up anaesthetizing their students' interest in writing.

I am not advocating that as writing program managers, we should insist on one teaching strategy. I recommend a series of alternative approaches to writing instruction. I am suggesting that the element of a general pedagogical approach adds both integrity and much needed consistency to the writing program. From the substantial body of information that continues to pour forth concerning the teaching of writing, managers should cull what they feel is necessary to the pedagogical approach of a writing program. Certainly, enough information currently exists to take a stand. Consider these selected findings which educational research, with varying degrees of certainty, has borne out:

- The teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing;

- students exposed to transformational sentence combining will show significant increases in syntactic fluency;
- writing is basically a self-taught skill produced by rewriting;
- free writing time improves fluency;
- the first teachers of composition - by giving certain descriptions of the composing process and by evaluating the products of student writing by highly selective criteria - set rigid parameters to students' writing behaviors; and
- students accept criticism more easily from peers than from their teachers.

Findings such as these, coupled with the philosophical element described ealier, provide the manager with enough decision making criteria for the pedagogical approach of the writing programs.

Element #4 - SUPPORTING MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

We are bombarded by the growing and impressive supply of materials, resources, ideas and products available from commercial publishers. In deciding which materials and resources to select for the writing program, there are three important considerations.

First, we should not allow the materials and resources to become the writing program itself! Quite often, and with the best of intentions, we spend large sums of money to "buy" writing programs. The scenario runs somewhat like this. We feel pressure from our staff, other administrators, or the greater school community to have a writing program (whatever that means to them). Presentations from commercial salespeople follow. Eventually, we make a selection which includes a series of textbooks for specific grade levels -- each with a teacher edition, ditto masters, workbooks, and evaluation instruments. Teachers begin to use these materials and voila - a writing program: an excellent example showing that the part is indeed equal to the whole!

A second consideration when selecting supporting materials and resources is the extent to which their focus or emphasis is in agreement with other elements of the writing program. For example, if one of the philosophical positions is that writing improves by writing, then one would not expect to find students spending the bulk of their time with a workbook series that requires them to complete a stream of worksheets. If the pedagogical element calls for students to choose most of their own topics for writing assignments, then a composition text that asks all students to write on a similar topic would be incongruous.

Finally, when we make decisions for this important element of the writing program, we should remind ourselves once again that teacher developed materials and resources, or their adaptations of existing materials, are still the most effective. Teachers know their students. They understand what it takes to move them from one point to the next. In addition, it is human nature for them to feel more ownership and comfort with their own materials and resources.

Element #5 - AN EVALUATION SYSTEM

Evaluation is feedback - information for growth and change. Within the context of a writing program there are four areas of evaluation: the student, the teacher, individual lessons or units of instruction, and the overall program itself. In choosing or developing appropriate yardsticks for each of these areas, there are certain questions that need to be answered -- What information concerning growth and change is important? What criteria should be employed for assessment? Who should be responsible for the evaluation?

Baseline information about a student's writing skills is essential. This information is easily arrived at by diagnosing an initial writing sample. Such a process will prove extremely useful to students and teachers because it will allow them to identify what goals seem reasonable to set for a marking period or a year's instruction. This type of diagnostic evaluation should be repeated three to four times during the school year.

A second type of student evaluation is that used for individual writing assignments. Here the feedback can be formal or informal and may be provided by the teachers, peers, or the student himself or herself. There is no particular need for every example of student writing to receive evaluation. There will be times when the act of writing is all that is desired. However, often evaluation takes place, and whatever the choices are for giving such feedback, it is important that the scheme for formative evaluation be in keeping with the other program elements.

When students are approaching the end of the year's work, a final or summative evaluation should take place. Again, the choice of instruments will depend on the skills and objectives of the course. While much has been written describing the range of techniques which can be used to evaluate individual students in a writing program, little attention has been given to assessing the performance of the teacher of writing. Certainly, individual student results shed some light on "how the teacher is doing." Informal feedback is readily available from the student/teacher writing conference, a method encouraged by a number of authorities

in the field. For those whose curiosity and risk taking run high, formal student questionnaires can be developed.

In attempting to evaluate individual lessons, units, and the overall program, teachers and supervisors should rely on random samples of student writing. The overriding goal for this level of evaluation is the improvement of instruction.

Element #6 - ON-GOING TEACHER TRAINING

There are two conditions which strongly suggest that ongoing teacher training be a basic element of a writing program: (1) the great majority of teachers of writing feel that they are ill prepared for this important task and (2) the great majority of teachers of writing will probably be in the field for some time to come.

When the National Council of Teachers of English surveyed its membership to find out how confident they felt to instruct in writing, two-thirds responded that they did not feel confident. And with little wonder. Pre-service preparation in the pedagogy of writing has been, and is, notoriously shallow. Historically, a course or two of freshman composition, and possibly an advanced course, have been the mainstay of teacher training in this pivotal area of the curriculum. How many of your teachers have had specialized training to instruct writing? And yet, we expect them to turn out competent writers.

We don't have to search much beyond our school or district to know that the teacher population has become extremely stabilized. Few people are moving into the field, and even fewer are leaving it. Therefore, although pre-service preparation in composition is in drastic need of change, it is in-service training which rightfully deserves our attention. This is one time when we need to concentrate on teaching the existing staff some new tricks.

As managers of curriculum, we must generate in-service programs and curriculum projects to develop the skills of our respective faculties. We must provide them with the additional training they need to feel confident to handle the difficult task of teaching writing. This commitment will provide a forum for teachers to develop philosophy, exchange ideas and techniques, and promote a writing program's most needed ingredient - consistency.

Lee Quill Planning Worksheets

In the first column, list any activities that might help improve Lee's program. At this point do not worry about time or resource limitations. When you finish, add any resources needed to complete the activity successfully.

Activities	Resources Needed to Complete Activities

Issues That Everyone Is Talking About

DIRECTIONS: Circle the number that best describes your opinion about the following issues. (NOTE: There is no right or wrong answer.)

1. Writing is a skill that will soon be obsolete.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

2. The major problem with student writing is mechanics.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

3. Part of every teacher's evaluation should be on how well he or she teaches writing.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

4. Spelling should be taught separately from writing.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

5. Of all the basic skills, writing is the least understood.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

6. To be a responsible evaluator of writing, a teacher must identify all errors.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

7. Every student should write a term paper before he or she leaves high school.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

8. Most teachers have the skills to teach writing.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

9. If a teacher teaches grammar, he or she is not teaching writing.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

10. Of all the basic skills, writing is the hardest to manage.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

11. When local schools aren't doing their job, the state snould step in.

1	2	3	4	5
agree				disagree

AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY ON WRITING FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Let's face it, as an administrator, your energies are predictably scattered. You would like to have the time to keep up with your reading, but you do not. Now, as a result of state policies for basic skills improvement, you are being asked to assess and restructure writing programs. What you need is a group of readings, brief to be sure, which will provide you with an overview of the current issues and trends surrounding the instruction, evaluation, and research of writing skills.

The following bibliography has been put together for this precise purpose. These selections were chosen for three principal qualities: readability, assessability, and the summative nature of their contents. They should provide you with a reasonable foundation for building a personal knowledge base concerning the (coordination?) issues associated with writing programs.

*The Best Short Statement on the State of the Art in Writing Instruction

"Writing Instruction," Nancy S. Olson, ASCD Curriculum Update, June, 1981.

In a brief article, Nancy S. Olson tells us what's to be learned from four current major research projects and from four exemplary writing programs. An excellent overview of issues and resources.

*For Administrators Who Only Have Time to Read One Book-Length Work on Writing, Read . . .

On Writing Well: An Informal Guide to Writing Nonfiction, William Zinsser, Harper and Row, 1980.

Zinsser entertains as he instructs. This 150-page book may at times disagree with what your English teacher taught you. It's full of common sense and full of examples.

*The Best Book to Keep on Your Desk

The Elements of Style, William Strunk, Jr. and E. B. White, MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1979 (Third Edition).

The New York Times calls this book "timeless." It's also brief, direct, and easy to use. Its major sections cover usage, composition, form, misused words and expressions, and some rules of style.

*The Best Piece of Information to Send Home

"How to Help Your Child Become a Better Writer," National Council of Teachers of English, Spring, 1981.

This leaflet lists ten things for parents to do at home and ten activities in support of school writing programs. Up to 14 are free.

*The Best Articles/Books on Correcting Student Papers

How to Handle the Paper Load, Gene Stanford, editor, National Council of Teachers of English, 1979.

Here are 27 articles to help your teachers to cut down their piles of papers and continue to teach writing well at the same time.

Measure for Measure. A Guideline for Evaluating Students' Expository Writing, Norman C. Najimy, editor, National Council of Teachers of English, 1981.

Twenty-two teachers from all levels of instruction in Berkshire County, Massachusetts, have developed a guidebook for teachers in all subject areas. Its 32 pages describe and demonstrate evaluation techniques. It is concrete, clear, and practical.

*The Best Source of Good Writing Assignments

Strategies for Teaching the Composition Process, Carl Koch and James M. Brazil, National Council of Teachers of English, 1978.

This book presents student-centered group strategies for teaching writing. It is divided into four sections: helping students overcome their fear of writing; helping students generate topics for writing; teaching students how to form and structure their ideas; and helping students edit and proofread their writing. Two appendices deal with evaluating writing.

*Articles Every Elementary School Staff Should Read and Discuss

The Craft of Writing, Lucy McCormick Calkins, Teacher, November/December, 1980.

Lucy McCormick Calkins of the University of New Hampshire Writing Lab "shows, not tells" how a wonderful third grade writing program looks and sounds.

Perspectives on Writing in Grades 1-8, Shirley Haley-James, Editor, National Council of Teachers of English, 1981.

This collection should bring you up to date on the research and practice in the teaching of elementary writing. The articles include "Twentieth-Century Perspectives on Writing in Grades One Through Eight," "Classroom Teachers' Reports on Teaching Written Composition," "A Functional Writing Program for the Middle Grades," "Romance Precedes Precision: Recommended Classroom Teaching Practices," and "A District-Wide Plan for the Evaluation of Student Writing."

*Articles Every Secondary School Staff Should Read and Discuss

Writing in the Secondary School: English and the Content Areas, Arthur Applebee, National Council of Teachers of English, Research Report No. 21 S, 1981.

This research report describes what is really going on in secondary classrooms -- in all subject areas -- as students learn to write. "Applebee suggests directions for the improvement of writing instruction -- including a major shift of emphasis in assigned writing -- and avenues for future research."

Eight Approaches to Teaching Composition, Timothy R. Donovan and Ben W. McClelland, editors, National Council of Teachers of English, 1980.

A series of clearly written articles that discuss how good writing happens. This book is a lot more theoretical than others on the list but is a widely recommended summary of the best recent thinking in the field.

*The Best Book for Writing in the Content Areas

Writing for Results: A Sourcebook of Consequential Composing Activities; Marlene Scardamalia, Carl Bereiter and Bryant Fillion; Open Court; LaSalle, Illinois, 1981.

This is a useful book containing more than 50 tested activities for improving student writing. Each activity lists its aim, how to organize instruction, special materials needed, the preparation and execution, consequences and feedback, examples, variations, and applications in a writing program in other subject areas.

All your teachers will want a copy.

*The Best Article on Grammar

"Twenty-one Kicks at the Grammar Horse," Ian S. Fraser and Lynda M. Hodson, English Journal, December, 1978.

Fraser and Hodson answer the key questions: What is grammar? Why should it be taught? How should it be taught?

You'll probably want to quote them.

*The Best Annotated Bibliography

NCTE Catalog 1981-1982, Professional Publications for the Teachers of English and the Language Arts, National Council of Teachers of English.

The NCTE catalog lists and describes 250 publications, most of which are published by the council. Others have been recommended by the NCTE Editorial Board of the NCTE Committee to Review Publications of Affiliates. Selections range from booklists to policy and position statements, from books and papers to cassettes and literary maps.

COORDINATING A WRITING PROGRAM: CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

DIRECTIONS: The lists below were created in an effort to organize the activities the coordinator of a writing program might/should do. They provide sample activities and outcomes in three categories: planning, organizing and controlling, and evaluating. Please eliminate or modify those that do not seem appropriate and add functions/activities that have been left out.

Functions	Sample Activities	Sample Outcomes
Planning	Schedule staff meetings and administrative meetings.	Common understanding of problems and development of plans for future.
	Create master calendar with dates and deadlines.	Awareness of key events and approaching deadlines.
	Collect input from staff on priority of school's/department's goals and objectives.	Staff involved in goal and priority setting. Administrator has important data.
	Determine and disseminate short range (one to two month) program goals.	All staff are aware of the immediate priority.
	Determine and disseminate current school year's goals and objectives.	Staff aware of the goals and objectives for year.
	Determine the information needs of the community, central office, and guidance departments and develop plan to obtain and disseminate necessary information.	All groups supplied with relevant information.

COORDINATING A WRITING PROGRAM: CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

Functions	Sample Activities	Sample Outcomes
Organizing/ Monitoring	Create a writing program resource center in school or department.	Teachers have access to materials.
	Review teachers' plans to determine if appropriate, considering short term and year long goals.	Teacher activities reflect department's/ school's philosophy.
	Create opportunities for students' writing to be reviewed/read by widest possible audience.	Motivation for students to produce high quality writing.
	Duplicate and circulate articles that might be of interest to individuals or the school staff as a whole.	Staff informed regarding new direction, issues, developments in writing.
	Encourage attendance at conferences and encourage sharing of ideas.	Staff informed regarding new direction, issues, developments in writing.
	Determine what materials are required and monitor materials' use.	Adequate materials will be on hand or, at least, staff aware when shortages are predicted.
	Provide staff-development based on teacher request and/or program need.	Staff has skills to meet department's/ school's goals.
	Encourage peer observation/team teaching.	

COORDINATING A WRITING PROGRAM: CRITICAL FUNCTIONS

Functions	Sample Activities	Sample Outcomes
Evaluating	Determine if department's/school's goals are being achieved.	Teachers have clear goals and administrator has reason/basis for evaluation.
	Evaluate students' writing to obtain information to fill needs of community, central office, staff, and guidance department.	Develop objective information about strengths and weaknesses of writing program based on evaluation of product.
	Solicit community input on the quality of student's writing.	Administrator has sense of how the community views program and can plan appropriately.
	Review state's basic skills law.	Administrator determines if program is in compliance with state law.

Program Planning Worksheets

Activities	Resources Needed to Complete Activities	Priority Order	Person Responsible	Due Date

Handout #7

Handout #8

Assignment: A 6th grade class read three articles on the history of flying.. They discussed each article and decided on topic sentences. Each student then wrote a paper using the topic sentences as the beginning of each paragraph.

Flying

Perhaps the earliest mention of human flight is the myth of Daedalus and Icarus. The way they got the wings is they took feathers from a big bird such as an eagle and sewed all the feathers together and then waxed them. Daedalus told Icarus not to go low because the dew will dampen the feathers and make them heavy. He said don't go to high or the sun will melt the wax Icarus went ahead and did loops and rolls. Then he fell to his death.

The first actual flight in an airplane was accomplished by the Wright brothers. The first real airplane flew in 1903 in Kitty Hawk. The airplane was built in the Wright brothers old, dusty bicycle shop. The Wright brothers were the best of friends. It probably wasn't very easy to fly the first plane. They were probably very determined to get it to fly.

Nowadays planes are a

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common and important part of the world we live in. Planes today are very well built and very big. I have never been on a plane but I really want to go on one. Planes today have an enormous amount of power. Airplanes today can fly from Canada to Boston in two or three hours.

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Analytical Scoring: An Overview

Analytical scoring is the close reading of all components of papers. It provides opportunities for teachers to help students develop as better writers.

Analytical scoring examines:

- Content
- Organization
- Sentence structure
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Strengths and weaknesses

We score analytically when we:

- Mark spelling errors
- Insert punctuation marks
- Call attention to the need for transitional phrases
- Correct an error in agreement
- Point out that an idea is vague, an expression is trite, or a paragraph is disorganized

ASSIGNMENT: Describe a favorite place of yours. Use sensory details to help your readers picture this place in their minds.

My Favorite Place

In my opinion a great place is the Big Discount store. Me and my friends go there a lot. I could even live there because its like a dream. You see shoppers shove and push to grab bargains, girls straiten counters one minute and the next minute it looks messier than before. And by the looks on their eyes you could see they want to yell or faint.

The best day to go to the Big D is when they have a sale, like the EOM sale. EOM stands for end-of-the-month. You see shoppers shoveling and pushing. Actually fighting sometimes. Its an exciting place.

There's another reason why I think Big Discount is one of my favorite places, that is the beauty of many things there. Things are arranged neat and clean, rows of red, yellow, and white towels down one isle, shelves of shiny silver and sparkly glass gifts down another isle, and rows and rows of unwrinkled clothes and a long display of fishing rods set up like a tent roof over one isle. You could stand there and look at the place all day long before it gets messed up by the bargain shoppers.

One more thing is the pet department. They have lots of different kinds of pets. You just want to stand there and look at them.

Now this is not an advertisement for the Big D because my father works there, its just because I like the place.

From: MEASURE FOR MEASURE: A Guide for Evaluating Students' Writing created by a team of teachers in the Pittsfield Region. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Handout #11

ASSIGNMENT: Describe a favorite place of yours. Use sensory details to help your readers picture this place in their minds.

My Favorite Place

In my opinion a great place is the Big Discount store. Me and my friends go there a lot. I could even live there because its like a dream. You see shoppers shove and push to grab bargains, girls straiten counters one minute and the next minute it looks messier than before. And by the looks on their eyes you could see they want to yell or faint.

The best day to go to the Big D is when they have a sale, like the EOM sale. EOM stands for end-of-the-month. You see shoppers shoveling and pushing. Actually fighting sometimes. Its an exciting place.

There's another reason why I think Big Discount is one of my favorite places, that is the beauty of many things there. Things are arranged neat and clean, rows of red, yellow, and white towels down one isle, shelves of shiny silver and sparkly glass gifts down another isle, and rows and rows of unwrinkled clothes and a long display of fishing rods set up like a tent roof over one isle. You could stand there and look at the place all day long before it gets messed up by the bargain shoppers.

One more thing is the pet department. They have lots of different kinds of pets. You just want to stand there and look at them.

Now this is not an advertisement for the Big D because my father works there, its just because I like the place.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE: A Guide for Evaluating Students' Writing Created by a team of teachers in the Pittsfield Region. Sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Education.

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HOLISTIC SCORING: AN OVERVIEW

Holistic scoring means reading and scoring a paper on the total effect of the first impression.

How is holisitc scoring done?

- A scoring team reads and analyzes a writing assignment topic.
- The team analyzes a sample range of papers.
- The team establishes a set of standards for judging compositions as:

  4) superior
  3) good
  2) fair
  1) poor

- 2-3 evaluators read and score each paper.
- If scores are adjacent (1/2, 2/3, 3/4) or identical, they are added to give a total.
- If scores are discrepant (1/3, 2/4, 1/4), they are given to a third reader who decides the score.

ANALYTICAL AND HOLISTIC SCORING OF WRITING:
ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES OF EACH

Analytical Scoring

Precise criteria make deciding correctness relatively easy.

Identification of particular components (or skills) which an individual student needs to work on is facilitated.

The scorer may address specific comments about a particular composition to the writer of that paper.

Analysis of components of a composition is time-consuming.

Using a standard set of criteria for evaluating all papers may be over-restrictive.

Scoring is done by one evaluator, so no opportunity is offered to scorers to gain new insights through prescoring sessions.

Emphasis is often placed on flaws rather than strengths of a paper.

Holistic Scoring

Criteria treat writing as a whole product, rather than as a set of separate components. The components are therefore considered simultaneously.

Having more than one evaluator score each paper leads to a fairly accurate assessment of a student's overall writing ability.

During the pre-scoring sessions evaluators have opportunities to gain new insights into writing through discussion of strengths and weaknesses of sample papers and through sharing of ideas about writing. These insights are often carried over into classroom teaching practices.

Emphasis is usually placed on strengths of a paper.

Many papers may be read and scored in relatively short time.

There is no opportunity for an evaluator to address specific comments about a particular composition to the writer

Adapted from Basic Skills Assessment: Manual for Scoring the Writing Sample, Published by Educational Testing Service

Handout #13

Assessing and Restructuring Writing Programs – Some Practical Guidelines for Administrators

Developed by

Jeffrey S. Lucove

Assessing and Restructuring Writing Programs - Some Practical Guidelines for Administrators

The passing of basic skills improvement policies brings new demands and opportunities for coordinators and supervisors of curriculum. One of the more challenging prospects of this new mandate is the assessment and restructuring of writing programs. Three conditions exist which will make these tasks particularly difficult: most administrators lack proper knowledge and experience in this area; most researchers generally feel insecure regarding the pedagogy of writing; and there is an intrinsic resistance toward program change within public schools. Realization of these conditions suggest three practical guidelines:

- develop a personal knowledge base;
- plan and carry out a collaborative state-of-the-art project; and
- employ a concerns-based approach to curriculum change.

Develop a Personal Knowledge Base

How much do you know about writing programs, the pedagogy of writing, or how students develop their writing skills? Before embarking on a course to assess the restructure of your school or district's writing program, you should first develop a knowledge base of the research and issues surrounding this pivotal area of the curriculum. The information contained in "Basic Elements of a Writing Program" and "An Annotated Bibliography on Writing for School Administrators," included in this resource manual provide you with a good beginning toward building this knowledge base. Additionally, you should do as many of the following as you have time for:

- Select and read publications from the National Council of Teachers of English. Look particularly at their guidelines for basic skills writing programs and at the various samples of curriculum guides reviewed by their panel of experts in writing instruction.
- Initiate meetings with colleagues to discuss common concerns about writing programs.
- Seek out and talk with teachers from your building or within your district who have reputations for being outstanding instructors of writing. They may have, or can direct you to, articles and/or books on the various elements of writing programs.

- Investigate and attend selected writing conferences and workshops sponsored by professional organizations or sponsored by your state's department of education.

Plan and Carry Out a Collaborative State-of-the Art Project

If we wish to be systematic in our plans for improving basic skills writing programs, we must begin by answering the question: How are we currently teaching writing skills? To gather and sort the information needed to answer this question, an assessment process must be established. And to help the chances for successful adoption of any program changes, administrators must enlist the support of those ultimately responsible for the implementation of any changes -- the teachers.

The department chairperson or curriculum coordinator, working in collaboration with those responsible for the instruction of writing skills, should produce a state-of-the-art report describing the existing school or district writing program. To prepare such a report, two important ingredients are required: a framework from which to make judgments of "what is" and measurement and other inquiry tools.

A framework for looking at present programming can be found in "Basic Elements of a Writing Program." A simple checklist, augmented by descriptions of each element, should suffice. Results from that effort can be complemented by a teacher questionnaire focused on methodological approaches and emphasis. Additional tasks that might be considered are:

- Reviewing a variety of curriculum guides for writing skills. These guides may be obtained from the National Council of Teachers of English or could be requested from other school districts.
- Reviewing the state's objectives for basic skills in writing.
- Reviewing selected commercial materials.
- Reviewing in-house curriculum packets and teacher-developed materials.
- Identifying where overlap and discontinuity of writing instruction exists.
- Attending selected workshops or conferences.

- Developing and administering a student questionnaire.
- Deciding on specific program changes.
- Developing a time line for implementation of suggested changes.

Employ a Concerns-Based Approach to Curriculum Change

You do not have to be intricately familiar with the literature on planned change to understand that it is a delicate process at best. Schools are often highly resistant to change. There are, however, certain steps or strategies which planners can utilize to reduce the fear and cynicism often associated with the change process. Since most teachers are not very comfortable with teaching writing to begin with, a collaborative state-of-the-art approach is particularly important when attempting to restructure this area of instruction. But beyond the assessment stage, administrators must employ a concerns-based approach to curriculum change. this requires certain assumptions regarding change as a phenomenon:[1]

1. Change is a process, not an event;
2. change is accomplished by individuals, not institutions;
3. change is a highly personal experience; and
4. change entails developmental growth in both feelings about and skills in using new programs.

Belief in these assumptions suggest that efforts to restructure writing programs should include the following activities:

-- establishing reasonable inservice and release time schedules for teachers to develop new skills;

-- staggering program changes to be consistent with preparation for such changes;

[1]Susan F. Loucks and Harold Pratt. "A Concerns-Based Approach to Curriculum Change." Educational Leadership 37 (December 1979): 212-216.

-- providing a variety of formats for teachers to express their feelings and concerns regarding changes as they are taking place and are being planned;

-- gearing training to varying levels of teacher expertise;

-- staggering evaluation procedures over an acceptable time frame; and

-- involving teachers in developing evaluation criteria and instruments.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Contents of Additional Resource Section

Suggestions for Using the Writing Folder in the Classroom

Writing Programs Assessment Instrument

Competency Programs for Basic Skill Improvement. . . Why?

Teacher's Program Assessment Sheet for Basic Skills Improvement

Assessment of Staff Information Needs Regarding Basic Skills Policy

Gearing Up for Basic Skills. . . Why?

Inservice Interest Survey

Individualized Language Arts Description

New Jersey Writing Project Description

Bibliography

Modules

I. Workshop Introduction

II. Case Study of Writing Coordinator

III. What Is A Writing Program

IV. Issues in Writing

V. Coordination Functions and Activities

VI. Writing About Writing

VII. Evaluating Writing Programs

VIII. Review of Resource Packet

Training Instructions

ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS is a workshop designed to help local administrators develop or refine their school system's writing program. Its focus is on program management, organization, and evaluation within the framework of a state's basic skills regulations. ADMINISTERING WRITING PROGRAMS is not a workshop on the teaching of writing. Rather, it provides the format, materials, and activities to conduct a workshop for superintendents, principals, department chairpeople, and language arts or basic skill coordinators who have major responsibility for program improvement.

Included in the training packet are agendas for a one-day workshop and a two-day workshop. The activities or modules are organized to create an awareness of the critical elements of a writing program, to develop an administrator's skill in writing program implementation, and to identify writing program resources. The workshop is activity oriented, so that participants will "learn by doing" and return to their schools with practical plans and ideas for improving writing.

Effective workshops just don't happen; they are well planned, carefully conducted and evaluated. The key to success is to remember that there is no substitute for good organization.

Some tips to remember for conducting workshops are:

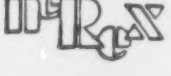
- Plan the agenda well in advance. Allow for additional unexpected participants.
- Have the workshop properly publicized (agenda, place of meeting, time, etc.).
- Develop a list of participants which includes their titles, phone numbers, and addresses. Hand out the list at the workshop.
- Check the facilities for the workshop. The arrangement of tables, chairs, etc. can be very important. The environment should be comfortable. Keep the registration table away from the door to avoid crowding and to encourage participants to take seats.

This manual was developed under contract with the
Northeast Regional Exchange, Inc.
by

The NETWORK, Inc.
290 South Main Street
Andover, MA 01810
(617)-470-1080

Founded in 1969, The NETWORK is a non-profit research and consulting organization providing services to a variety of national and local human service organizations in the private and public sectors. Services provided by The NETWORK are ones in which the client is in control of the change or improvement effort. Specifically, The NETWORK helps clients to define their problems, carry out the solutions, make adjustments, and evaluate results. Individualized training is developed to help people practice and implement new ideas and techniques.

David P. Crandall, Executive Director
David Max McConkey, Director
John Collins, Project Director



Northeast Regional Exchange
101 Mill Road
Chelmsford, MA 01824
(617)-256-3987

The Northeast Regional Exchange, Inc. (NEREX) is a service agency that seeks to promote educational improvement through sharing of information and resources among the seven states of the Northeast. By providing information, technical assistance, and training through State Departments of Education within the region, NEREX services local school districts and other organizations with a vested interest in the improvement of education and human services for children and adults. NEREX utilizes the resources of other regional and national research, development, and service organizations by linking into existing educational networks and brokering services of those organizations within the region. Through NEREX, states are able to expand their available resource base and work through regional sharing efforts toward program improvement.

J. Lynn Griesemer, Executive Director
Larry Vaughan, Dissemination Specialist
Douglas Fleming, Resource Facilitator

For additional copies of this handbook, or for information on training or consultation in the areas of administering, evaluating or implementing writing programs, contact:

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TRAINING INSTRUCTIONS

Suggestions for Using the Writing Folder in the Classroom

Developed by

Norm Colb and Kalle Gerritz
58 Graylock Road
Newtonville, Massachusetts

Suggestions for Using The Writing Folder in the Classroom

A composition folder can be used in a number of ways to complement, focus, and strengthen a teacher's writing program. The following notes indicate three levels of use ranging from the most superficial to the most integrated and sophisticated. As teachers gain experience with a folder, they find themselves moving from one level to the next, gradually realizing more and more of a folder's potential to help their students become successful writers.

LEVEL 1: Record Keeping

At this level of use, students see their folders only at the end of the school year. They may review their collected compositions; select those pieces of writing that they want to represent their work for the year; and, in consultation with their teacher, rate their progress on each skill listed for their grade.

Beginning in grade 4, many teachers make a practice of having students assess their own writing skills on a sequential skills profile. Each student then discusses his or her skill profile with the teacher, who corroborates the self-assessment or indicates needed changes. The resulting profile is then recorded and included in the folder. Teachers who make use of this practice report that it helps students to gain a clearer sense of the skills as they are actually used in their writing.

Even the relatively superficial use of a composition folder has important benefits for students and their writing. Most obviously, the folder is a powerful signal that writing is an important and valued part of the school curriculum; in many classrooms writing has taken on a new significance and has been allotted more of the crowded school day in response to this signal. Students also benefit from having the opportunity to review their work from previous years. The annual distribution of folders can stimulate students' interest in their own growth and progress as writers.

LEVEL 2: Curriculum Sequence

In addition to their record-keeping function, folders can be used as important curriculum planning guides.

One of the major principles underlying a folder's skill organization is that the number of skills introduced in any grade must be manageable for the student of average ability. By way of contrast, most language arts textbook series introduce all -- or certainly most -- of the skills of writing early in a child's school career; subsequent volumes in a series usually do little but repeat the same set of skills through more complicated materials and examples. The skills remain essentially the same, year after year, as the student works through the series. Largely because of this organizing principle, younger students, in particular, often find a textbook-based skill program simply bewildering. Far too many skills are introduced and, while the text may explain them thoroughly and logically, the student too often is frustrated by the expectation that he or she master all of the skills simultaneously.

This problem is virtually eliminated when a composition folder is developed and used to determine the skills which are to be introduced in each grade. Used as a curriculum guide, the skills list in the folder for each grade defines the instructional agenda for the year. Unlike standard language arts textbooks, no effort should be made to cover all skills in a single year; rather, teachers should focus only on those few specific skills assigned to a grade. As they move through the grades, students are exposed to a coherent and developmental skill sequence, a sequence designed to foster a sense of competence, not frustration.

A composition folder should introduce skills in reasonable numbers for each grade. Students are expected to retain mastery of the skills introduced in earlier years and to focus their attention on a small number of new skills. Because writing skills are introduced so gradually, students have every chance to master them before moving on to the increased expectations of the following grade.

LEVEL 3: Instructional Practices

A composition folder realizes its fullest potential when it is used in conjunction with a set of specific instructional techniques. As detailed below, these techniques have two important traits in common:

- they help teachers to individualize their interactions with students so that each member of the class is working on a skill area which is appropriate for his/her level of achievement, and
- they help students to focus their attention on one specific skill as it is used in their writing and, by doing so, to promote genuine mastery of that skill.

The four practices described in the following pages rest on the periodic use of a writing skill profile.

The skill profile is stapled on the inside of a manila folder which contains the student's current writing. Approximately once each month the student reviews his or her ratings on the profile and, in consultation with the teacher, revises the profile to reflect his or her most recent level of achievement.

A. Editing

Students should be encouraged to perceive the process of writing as consisting of three distinct phases:

> Generating a first draft. The purpose here is to commit ideas to paper; to put down as much information as comes to mind about a topic, with only loose regard to matters of form and correctness.
>
> Shaping and revising. In this phase, attention should be given to adding details, organizing paragraphs, and ensuring that the paper flows in a coherent direction. This phase focuses on issues of rhetoric and style.
>
> Editing and proofreading the final draft. The final phase is concerned with the conventions of "correct" usage and mechanics. During this phase the student checks spelling, makes sure that punctuation is accurate, and polishes the draft to its final form.

Unfortunately, a great many students do not understand this process. Some attempt to write fully edited, error-free drafts, and typically produce stilted and artificial sounding compositions. Other students do not have a clear sense of what the conventions of usage and mechanics are and hand in papers filled with errors.

Both types of students need, first, to learn the general process of writing outlined above. Then, as the last step in the writing process, students should consult their most recent skill profile and check their work for all of the skills which they have mastered. The skill profile should not be consulted before the final draft is being polished; nor should the final draft be submitted to the teacher without this focused attention to those skills which the student has under control. Students must be responsible for editing their work for correct use of these skills, or else the teacher will gain all the editing practice!

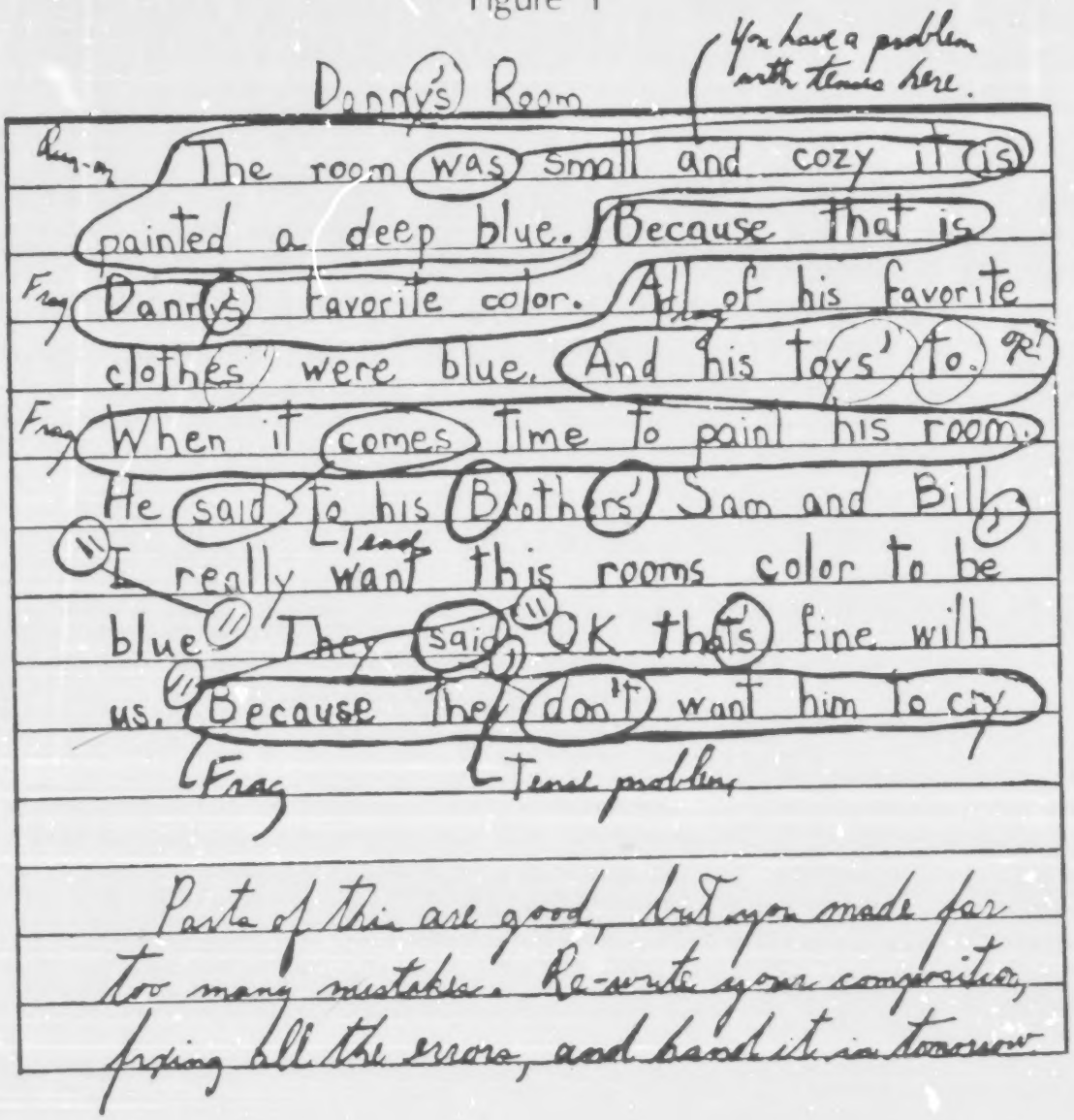
B. Correcting Papers

One of the most frustrating aspects of teaching students to write is that they persist in making exactly the same types of errors in paper after paper. Indeed, many twelfth grade students commit precisely the same errors they had made in grade 3; these errors have persisted despite the dedicated efforts of teachers who have corrected them hundreds -- possibly thousands -- of times.

Why should this be? One major reason students fail to apply basic skills and to eliminate errors from their writing is that they have not had the opportunity to see that their errors fall into a small number of patterns. Students often believe that their errors are random events, and many despair of ever controlling the mysterious forces -- rules -- which dictate matters of correctness.

As difficult as it may be to believe, conscientious teachers may contribute to this sense of confusion and bewilderment through their correction of student writing. Figure 1 presents a thoroughly corrected paper written by a fifth grader. For this student to learn from the teacher's corrctions would take an enormous effort. Even supposing that the student could "fix" all the errors in a revision, he or she most likely would not gain any understanding of the few, relatively simple rules which underlie most of this paper's problems. In short, this type of correction does not supply the students with an instructional agenda for growth. If it accomplishes anything, this type of correction probably is most effective in convincing the student that mastery of writing skills is well beyond his/her grasp.

Figure 1


You have a problem with tenses here.
Danny's Room
The room was small and cozy it is painted a deep blue. Because that is Danny's favorite color. All of his favorite clothes were blue. And his toys' too. or!
When it comes time to paint his room. He said to his Brothers' Sam and Bill, "I really want this rooms color to be blue" They said "OK that's fine with us." Because they don't want him to cry
Frag
Tense problem
Parts of this are good, but you made far too many mistakes. Re-write your composition, fixing all the errors, and hand it in tomorrow.

Recognizing the futility of correcting papers in this fashion, many teachers adopt the practice, represented in Figure 2, of making no corrections at all. Here, general comments are substituted for specific correcting. Ironically, this type of response suffers from the same shortcoming noted above: the student is given no agenda for growth. In the absence of such an agenda, the student will continue to make the same "careless mistakes" in paper after paper; he or she has not been given any help in understanding how to avoid making those errors which the teacher keeps noting.

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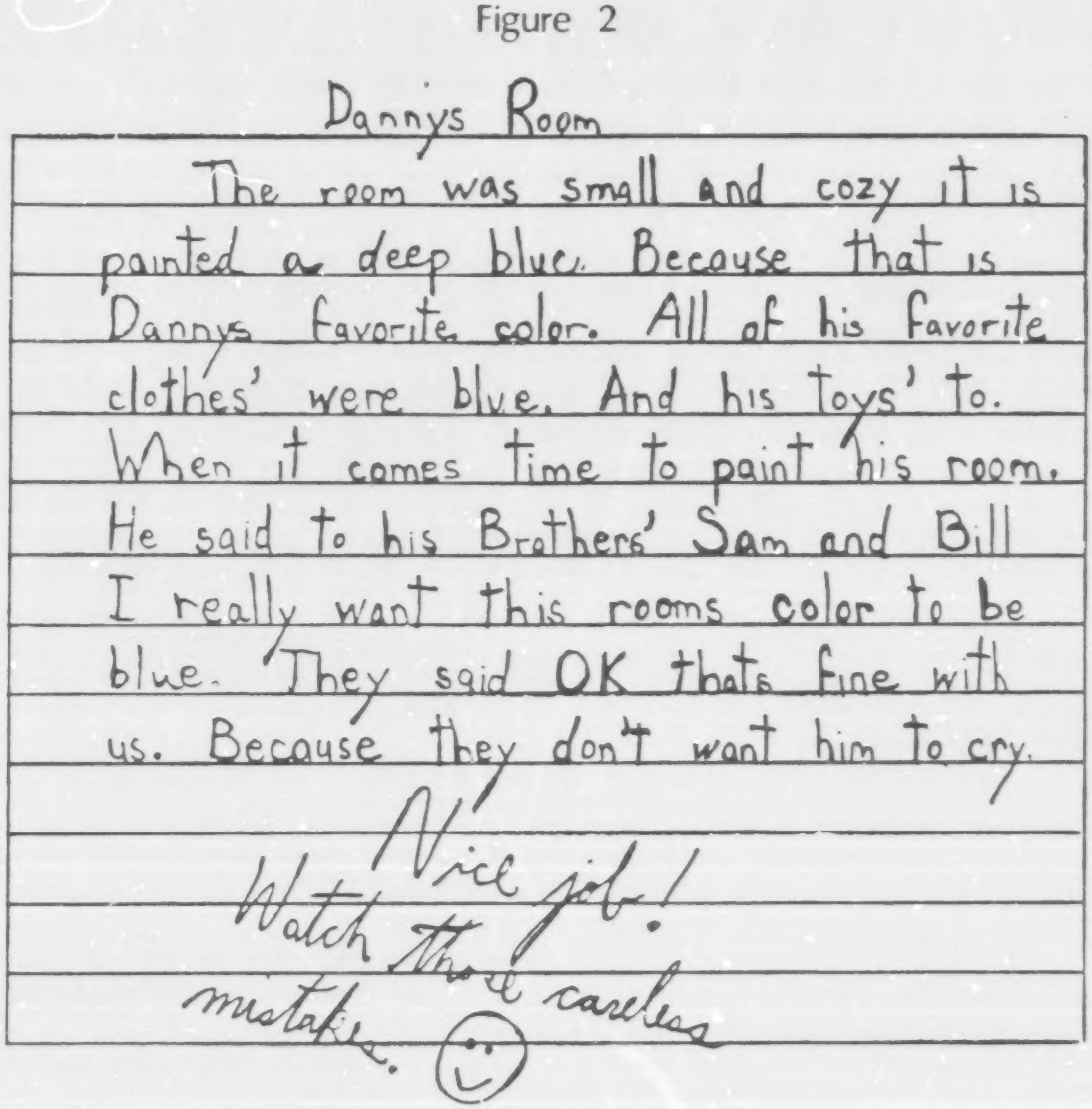
Figure 2


Dannys Room
The room was small and cozy it is painted a deep blue. Because that is Dannys favorite color. All of his favorite clothes' were blue. And his toys' to. When it comes time to paint his room. He said to his Brothers' Sam and Bill I really want this rooms color to be blue. They said OK thats fine with us. Because they don't want him to cry.
Nice job!
Watch those careless mistakes.

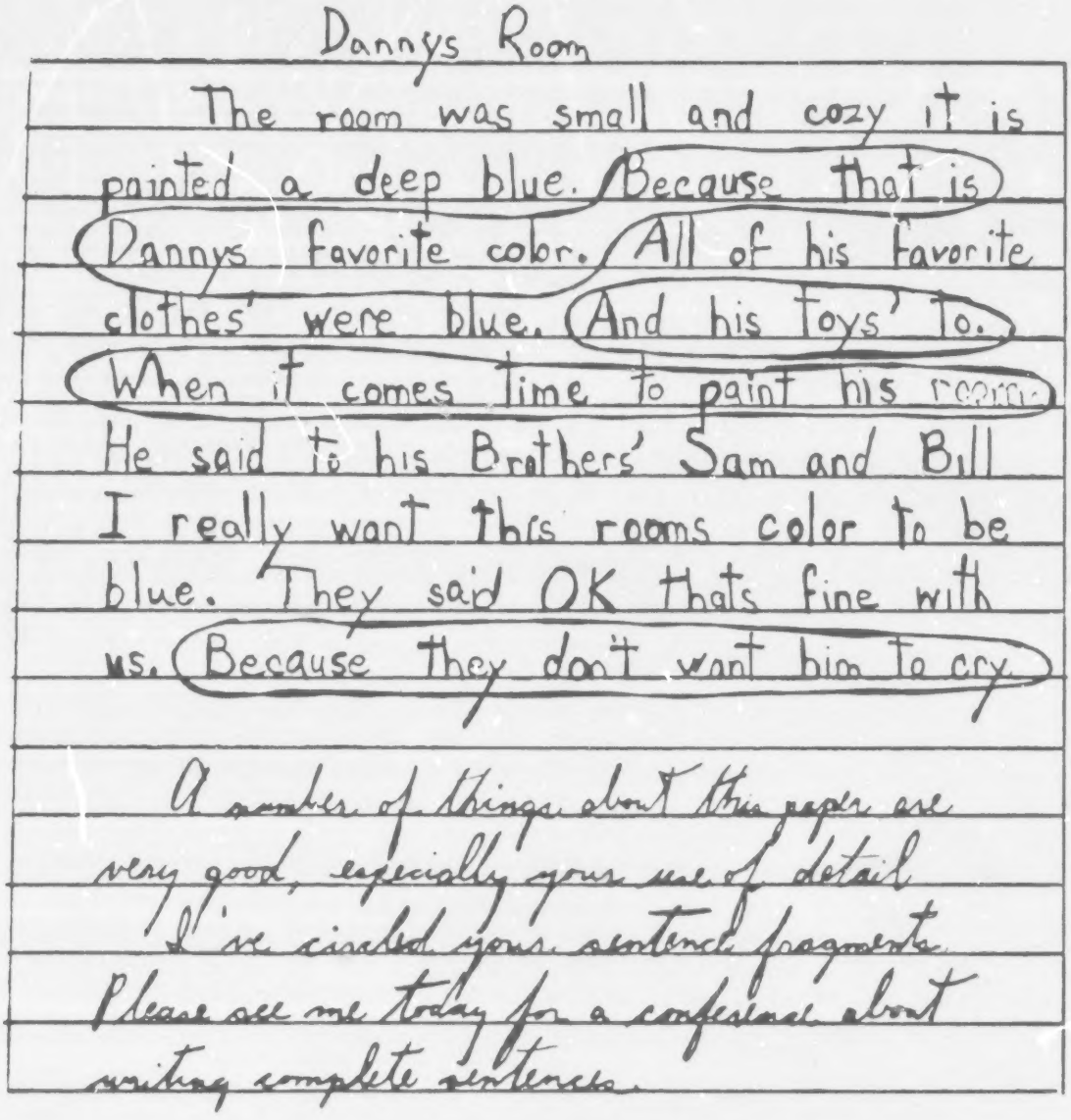
A third way of responding to student writing is depicted in Figure 3. Here the teacher deliberately focuses on only one error so as to reveal a pattern to the student; in turn, the student can focus on this pattern and eliminate one broad set of errors from his or her writing. Later, the teacher will also attend to tense consistency, the apostrophe, and quotation marks -- three areas which account for most of the remaining errors in this student's writing.

This third type of response, single skill correction, allows the student to see that his or her writing has a finite number of problems; through use of the skill profile the teacher can show the student that he or she has to work on only a limited number of

skill areas, in this case four. The teacher's message to the student is one of both hope and direction. The teacher and student both know the skills which need attention and know, further, that these skills constitute a manageable agenda. By addressing one skill at a time, the teacher allows the student to focus full attention directly on that one skill. Once a skill has been mastered, the student is responsible for maintaining control over that skill (see previous section), while a new area receives exclusive instructional attention.

Note: Parents may be confused if their children bring home compositions corrected around a single skill focus. Teachers have found that a note to parents, explaining the system and outlining the skills students will be learning, does much to allay concerns and to foster confidence in the school's writing program.

Figure 3


Dannys Room
The room was small and cozy it is painted a deep blue. Because that is Dannys favorite color. All of his favorite clothes' were blue. And his toys' To. When it comes time to paint his room. He said to his Brothers' Sam and Bill I really want this rooms color to be blue. They said OK thats fine with us. Because they don't want him to cry.
A number of things about this paper are very good, especially your use of detail. I've circled your sentence fragments. Please see me today for a conference about writing complete sentences.

C. Peer Help

Beginning in the middle grades, the teacher need not and should not be the only source of help for the student who is focusing on a single skill in his or her writing. Typically, other students have already mastered the skill; they constitute a potentially rich source of help that is too often ignored in the classroom.

Before the teacher corrects a student's paper concerning a single skill, the student should have the paper reviewed and edited by a

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peer who has demonstrated a command of that skill. Peer assistance does not take place spontaneously; however, nor is it much help for a teacher simply to urge students to review their work with each other. To foster genuine and effective peer assistance, specific practices must be introduced in the classroom and used regularly.

Possibly the most effective system involves the use of a teacher-made device very much like a wall-mounted cloth shoe holder. Each pocket is labeled with the name of a writing skill. The names of students proficient in each skill are written on strips of oaktag and placed in the appropriate pocket. Before handing the paper in to the teacher, the student consults the pocket for the skill on which he or she is working and has an editing conference with one of those students whose name appears in the pocket. Teachers report that even their most skill-deficient students achieve impressive growth through this sytem.

D. Writing in the Content Areas

By grade 7, most students have left self-contained classrooms and entered a departmentalized structure. Here they typically are taught by four or more adults. A great deal of writing may be required by the English teacher, as well as by the teachers of social studies and science.

Unfortunately, students often see little connection between the writing skills they study in English and the writing they produce in their other subjects; further, the social studies teacher's composition corrections may have no connection with the skills students are attempting to master in their English class. As they move from class to class, students can become confused by the range of expectations about writing which face them. The problems posed by varying expectations are virtually inevitable: teachers simply do not have the time to coordinate their expectations for all of the students for whom they are responsible.

Single skill correction can offer a convenient solution to this cluster of problems. As a student focuses on a skill in English class, the content area teachers correct his or her work for the same skill. (An extension of this procedure requires the student to proofread all writing for those skills he or she has previously mastered.) Before the student submits a paper to any content area teacher, the student writes on the top of the paper, "Please correct for _____" filling in the name of the skill he or she is currently addressing.

This simple procedure can do much to establish a consistent and coherent pattern of expectations for students; this pattern of expectations, in turn, helps to foster growing skill mastery by reinforcing the accurate use of skills whenever students have occasion to write.

WRITING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

by
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The NETWORK, Inc.
Andover, Massachusetts

The Writing Program Assessment Instrument provides a quick, relatively easy way to determine the activities that make up your current writing program. The instrument lists twenty activities that are important if your system is to have an effective program. Some of the items on the list could be controversial since there is little agreement in the field as to the exact definition of an ideal writing program, but the total list represents writing activities that leading authorities consistently mention as being critical.

The items are written as generally as possible to encourage some latitude in interpretation; therefore, before you've administered the writing program assessment instrument, you may want to make some of the items more specific. You may also want to add additional items.

When tallied, the results of the survey by grade level provide information to answer the following important questions.

1. What are the writing activities that most of the staff do on a regular basis?

2. Are there any activities that consistently score high across all grade levels?

3. Are the activities that score consistently high sufficient to make up a writing program?

4. Are there surprisingly conspicuous gaps in the activities at one or all grade levels?

5. Are the activities listed the ones that are most important to your school system?

By analyzing the results of the survey in relationship to the questions above, you will have taken a first step towards answering the question, "What exactly is our writing program anyway?"

Additional Steps

Another use of the instrument is as a list of activities from which program priorities can be selected. By having groups of staff members indicate what they think are the most important items on the list and by concentrating on implementing these activities, you can begin to improve your writing program with very little expense or effort and the program, if based on teacher selected activities, should have broad support.

WRITING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT

Please rate the items using the following scale. Try to make as accurate estimate as possible. If you are not sure how to respond to an item, leave it blank.

Rating Scale

5 -- Very frequently, many times during a month.

4 -- Frequently, two or three times during a month.

3 -- Regularly, once or twice during a month.

2 -- Occasionally, about ten times during a year.

1 -- Infrequently, a few times during a year.

0 -- Rarely.

Grade levels you teach: _____

Item	Rating
1 -- Give writing assignments based on personal experiences.	_____
2 -- Provide opportunities for students to review written work completed earlier in the year.	_____
3 -- Give writing assignments of a minimum of a paragraph in length.	_____
4 -- Provide opportunities to write during class time.	_____
5 -- Provide opportunites to discuss and clarify writing assignments before students begin writing.	_____
6 -- Provide opportunities for students to brainstorm about a topic before they begin writing.	_____
7 -- Provide opportunities to work on one assignment over a period of a few days.	_____

Item	Rating
8 -- Teach editing skills (Sentence combining, eliminating unnecessary words and phrases, checking for variety of language, analyzing for clarity of expression, etc.).	_____
9 -- Provide opportunities for students to read written work aloud to individuals or to small groups of students.	_____
10 -- Display or "publish" examples of high-quality work.	_____
11 -- Provide specific suggestions to students for improvement.	_____
12 -- Teach proofreading skills (punctuation, editing symbols, manuscript form).	_____
13 -- Give writing assignments that are meant to be read by readers other than the teacher (letters, reports to the community, etc.)	_____
14 -- Teach grammar usage and mechanics in relationship to the students' current writing problems.	_____
15 -- Write positive comments on students' written work.	_____
16 -- Work along with students on the same writing assignment.	_____
17 -- Conduct individual writing conferences with students.	_____
18 -- Encourage students to "peer edit" each others papers before they are handed in.	_____
19 -- Provide specific information abut the criteria you will use to correct each assignment.	_____
20 -- Please list other writing activities that you do on a regular basis.	

Teacher Program Assessment Sheet for Basic Skills Improvement

Questions	Responses		
	YES	NOT SURE	NO
1. Can you list and/or locate your current instructional objectives that contribute to basic skills improvement?	___	___	___
2. Can you state specific student behaviors and achievement levels that demonstrate basic skill acquisition?	___	___	___
3. Have you determined what teaching behaviors you need to demonstrate to prevent student failure in basic skill areas?	___	___	___
4. Have you developed a screening process that will help you identify students who might have difficulty meeting your school system's standards in basic skills?	___	___	___
5. Have you developed a system to diagnose specific student weaknesses?	___	___	___
6. Do you have a program that prescribes solutions to diagnosed problems?	___	___	___
7. Do you have a method of monitoring progress toward competency standards?	___	___	___
8. Are you aware of program alternatives that may help you improve your current practice?	___	___	___

Assessment of Staff Information Needs Regarding Basic Skills Policy

Although the state has developed a Basic Skills Policy, the policy leaves many decisions up to local districts. Would you like more information about your schools? Check those items about which you'd like more information.

____ 1. What are the specific provisions of the state's Basic Skills Improvement Policy, and how will it affect me?

____ 2. Who will be developing my school's basic skills improvement policy?

____ 3. When will my school's policy be determined?

____ 4. What will my school's testing program entail (which tests, which grade levels, etc.)?

____ 5. How will criteria be set for determining whether a student has "mastered" a particular skill?

____ 6. Who will be involved...all teachers, or only those who now teach "basic skills" (math, reading, English, etc.)?

____ 7. Will individual teachers be held accountable for a particular child who has not mastered a specific skill?

____ 8. How will my school provide remedial help to children who do not demonstrate basic skill competencies?

____ 9. Will this policy require changes in teaching procedures?

____10. What is the relationship among the basic skills program, Title I program, and special education program?

____11. Other:

What potential benefits/drawbacks do you antitipate in implementing the basic skills policy?

Gearing Up For Basic Skills Regulations

	Have in place	Easily Possible	Possible	Troublesome	Very Difficult
1) Select person responsible for designing system's/school's basic skills improvement plan.	___	___	___	___	___
2) Review result of statewide writing assessment, if one was completed.	___	___	___	___	___
3) Provide for community imput in planning and standard setting.	___	___	___	___	___
4) Determine if writing will be tested under the basic skills improvement plan.	___	___	___	___	___
5) Determine if testing results will be made available to general public.	___	___	___	___	___
6) At the secondary level, provide for student involvement during the planning.	___	___	___	___	___
7) Establish minimum writing standards at elementary level.	___	___	___	___	___
8) Establish minimum writing standards at secondary level.	___	___	___	___	___
9) Determine if testing process must be approved by state.	___	___	___	___	___

	Have in place	Easily Possible	Possible	Troublesome	Very Difficult
10) Select testing procedure for writing.	___	___	___	___	___
11) Determine how often writing will be tested, what grades.	___	___	___	___	___
12) Select person responsible for monitoring and implementing plan.	___	___	___	___	___
13) Allocate resources for teacher training if necessary.	___	___	___	___	___
14) Provide provisions for bilingual students.	___	___	___	___	___
15) Provide provisions for special education students.	___	___	___	___	___
16) Provide provisions for transfer students.	___	___	___	___	___
17) Determine if individual test results will be available to parents, students.	___	___	___	___	___

Inservice Interest Survey

Please indicate the topics you'd most like to see included in inservice programs during the remainder of the school year by checking three topics in each area most useful to you. Circle the check of the one most important topic in each area.

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

____ constructing better teacher-made tests
____ modifying tests for slow learners
____ techniques for assessing listening & speaking skills
____ techniques for assessing writing skills
____ preparing & using behavioral objectives
____ interpreting test results
____ ongoing monitoring of student performance
____ recordkeeping shortcuts & tactics
____ other:

INSTRUCTION

____ using test results for remediating planning
____ classroom remediation techniques
____ integrating basic skills teaching in all classes
____ techniques for teaching writing skills
____ techniques for teaching listening & speaking skills
____ techniques for spelling instruction
____ metrics - how and when to teach
____ modifying instructional materials
____ learning styles & learning rates
____ peer teaching and peer tutoring tactics
____ other:

COMMUNICATION & AFFECTIVE AREAS

____ affective activities for classroom use
____ counseling techniques for classroom use
____ counseling with parents
____ communication between regular teachers and specialists
____ motivating hard-to-reach kids
____ teacher-to-teacher communication across grade levels
____ student conferencing
____ other:

If you could talk candidly with the people planning and conducting inservice programs for the remainder of the year, what advice would you give them?

Grade level(s): _____
Subject area(s): _____

PROJECT INDIVIDUALIZED LANGUAGE ARTS: Diagnosis, Prescription, and Evaluation

A project combining a language-experience approach with techniques derived from modern linguistic theory to enhance skills in written composition.

target audience

Approved by JDRP for grades 3-6. This program has been used in other settings with grades 1-2 and 7-12, language arts, English content-area classes, college basic skills programs, adult education programs, special education programs, and independent and supplementary programs in written composition, but no evidence of effectiveness has been submitted to or approved by the Panel.

description

At least three times a year, the teacher evaluates writing samples composed by students on self-selected topics. Utilizing criteria common to nearly all language arts programs, the teacher is then able to assign priorities to the needs of the whole class, groups of students, and individual youngsters. For each objective stemming from this diagnosis, a teacher's resource manual prescribes a variety of writing or rewriting techniques for all content areas involving writing. Motivation for writing is strengthened by a "communication spiral" that links composition to the other language arts and to real-life experience. A record keeping system permits students, teachers, administrators, and parents to observe growth in writing proficiency from month to month and grade to grade. The program can be combined readily with existing language arts curricula and objectives.

evidence of effectiveness

Since 1971, evaluations utilizing holistic or criterion-referenced designs with writing samples from students, grades 1-12, in a variety of settings (urban, suburban, and rural) consistently show significant gains in vocabulary, sentence structure, organization, mechanics, and grammar for students in ILA classes.

implementation requirements

District makes a definite commitment to improving basic writing skills of all students. District sends initial cadre of teachers and administrators to New Jersey (or elsewhere by arrangement) for two-day training and purchases copies of Teacher's Resource Manual and Management Manual (for administrators). District assumes responsibility for extending program to other grades, classes, and/or schools in future years, with trained administrators conducting inservice programs. District reports to project (directly or through NDN Facilitator) on extent and quality of implementation.

financial requirements

District assumes (or shares with NDN Facilitator) the costs of releasing teachers and administrators for training workshops. District assumes (or shares with NDN Facilitator) per diem, travel, and lodging costs for project staff. Teacher's Resource Manual: $10 per copy. Management Manual (for administrators): $2 per copy.

services available

Awareness materials are available at no cost. Visitors are welcome any time by appointment at project site and additional demonstration sites in home state and out of state. Project staff are available to attend out-of-state awareness meetings (travel and per diem must be paid). Training is conducted at project site only during three to four weeks throughout the year (all expenses must be paid, including trainees' travel and per diem, and $10 for manual). Training is also available at adopter site (costs to be negotiated). Implementation and follow-up services are available to adopters (costs to be negotiated).

contact Jeanette Alder, Project Director; Woodrow Wilson School; Hauxhurst Ave.; Weehawken, NJ 07087. (201) 865-1506.

Developmental Funding: USOE ESEA Title III JDRP No. 74-55 Approved: 5/23/74

Compiled Summer 1981

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PROJECT THE NEW JERSEY WRITING PROJECT

A teacher training program that improves student writing.

target audience

Approved by JDRP for teachers and students grades 7-12, all ability levels. It has been implemented K-6 as well, but no evidence of effectiveness has been submitted to or approved by the Panel.

description

The New Jersey Writing Project is a state-wide writing program based on a thorough knowledge of the composing process. This project is predicated on the following assumptions: writing is a process and a mode of learning, teachers of writing should write, teachers teaching teachers accomplishes efficient curriculum change, theory about and assessment of writing should enhance classroom practices.

The program involves three stages: teacher training, implementation and staff development, and assessment. The teacher training stage is a three-week summer institute for teachers from multiple districts in the same geographic region. Each day of the training program is divided into a writing/sharing morning session and a theory presentation in the afternoon. The second stage is a two-part program. First, returning teacher consultants introduce writing as a process into their classrooms. Within the confines of the regular English period each teacher provides time for students to write in class. All students are instructed in the process of effective editorial feedback. Teachers do not have to edit each student's paper because students do that for themselves and for others. Second, in addition to implementation in the classroom the returning teachers begin staff development programs suited to the unique needs of district curricula. The third stage involves the development and use of assessment instruments and procedures. This evaluative phase encompasses the following components: students' writing samples; training for teachers in holistic scoring; and teacher and student writing attitude surveys.

evidence of effectiveness

Writing samples obtained in October and May from 1,400 students in eight treatment districts and seven control districts representing urban, suburban, and rural New Jersey were scored using a holistic method developed by Educational Testing Service. Regression analysis, adjusting posttest scores for pretest scores, indicated that the difference between treatment and control groups was highly significant ($p \leq .001$), amounting to 45.5% of the standard deviation of the posttest distribution.

implementation requirements

The program should be adopted by a group of districts wishing to work jointly on student writing. Training is required. One or two district teachers receive intensive training and return to their schools to train others.

financial requirements

Costs are limited to training. Training for a group of 25 teachers from 10-20 districts at adopter site: a trainer for three weeks, $1,500; travel and residency for the trainer, if required, approximately $1,500; payment or credits for participating teachers as per local option, paper and supplies, $300; texts per participant, approximately $25; two release days per participant for evaluation data analysis.

services available

Awareness materials are available at no cost. Visitors are welcome any time by appointment at project site and additional demonstration sites in home state Project staff are available to attend out-of-state awareness meetings (costs to be negotiated). Training is conducted at project site in three-week sessions during July and August (adopter pays only its own costs). Training is also available at adopter site, usually in three-week full-day sessions in June, July, or August (all expenses must be paid, including trainer's stipend, cost of training materials, and trainer's travel and per diem). Implementation and follow-up services are available to adopters (costs to be negotiated).

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